

Africa: Battleground For NATO's 21st Century Strategic Concept

By [Rick Rozoff](#)

Global Research, May 19, 2011

Stop NATO 19 May 2011

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

The war by major North Atlantic Treaty Organization member states against Libya is in its third month and has been conducted under the official auspices of NATO for the past fifty days.

According to the military bloc's daily online tally [1], Alliance military aircraft have flown over 7,200 missions and more than 2,800 combat flights since NATO inaugurated so-called Operation Unified Protector on March 31.

The world's only military alliance stands to match or exceed the 78-day duration of its air war against Yugoslavia in 1999 if not to deploy troops in Libya in what could expand into protracted combat and occupation roles like those in Afghanistan and adjoining nations where the Pentagon and NATO will mark the tenth anniversary of their invasion this October 7.

Recently Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko "Pointed out that the operation in Libya is becoming the first actual litmus test for NATO's new strategic concept," [2] a reference to the latest Strategic Concept adopted by the 28-nation alliance at its summit in Lisbon, Portugal last November, the first in this century and since that endorsed at the Washington summit in 1999 when NATO was waging its first war (against Yugoslavia) and incorporating its first post-Cold War recruits (the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland).

The war against Libya was also the test case for U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), the first overseas military command launched by the Pentagon since the end of the Cold War (its predecessor, Central Command, was created in 1983), whose Joint Task Force Odyssey Dawn was in charge of bombing runs and cruise missile attacks in and a naval blockade of Libya from March 19-30.

The activation of AFRICOM as an independent command on October 1, 2008 and the expansion of NATO into Africa were integrally, inevitably related developments, as the top military chief of U.S. European Command, to which almost the entire African continent and the nascent AFRICOM were for years assigned, and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe are and for almost 60 years have been the same person, currently America's Admiral James Stavridis.

In what may have imminent and menacing implications for the ongoing conflict in Libya, Africa is also the laboratory for the 25,000-troop NATO Response Force, intended to be deployable within five days throughout the world and to sustain operations, including combat missions, for up to six months. In other words, the world's first international military

strike force. The NATO Response Force was an initiative of then-U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld which was endorsed by the Alliance at its 2002 summit in the Czech Republic, the latter only having been brought into NATO three years before.

In 2006 NATO held a large-scale two-week military exercise in the west African island nation of Cape Verde codenamed Steadfast Jaguar with almost 8,000 troops from 25 of the Alliance's 26 members at the time. Fighter jets, attack helicopters, warships including the Sixth Fleet flagship USS Mount Whitney and American special forces were also employed in NATO's first war games in Africa. To indicate the groundbreaking significance of the event, the bloc's secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and the North Atlantic Council – the ambassadors of all NATO member states – traveled to Cape Verde to inspect the exercise.

In the words of Scheffer: "You see here the new NATO, the NATO that has the capacity to be expeditionary. In the 21st century you have to be prepared to project stability over long distances...." Associated Press at the time cited then-NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe and commander of U.S. European Command Marine General James Jones (later the Obama administration's first National Security Advisor) as envisioning the role of the NATO Response Force as one that "could entail naval patrols to protect tankers off the coast of West Africa or security for storage and production facilities in areas such as the oil-rich Niger Delta." Immediately after assuming the dual commands in January 2003 Jones laid the groundwork for the permanent deployment of U.S. and NATO military assets in the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea off the continent's western shores. [3]

Steadfast Jaguar was the first joint infantry-air force-naval operation conducted for and by the global NATO strike force. In the words of a Washington Times report during the war games, "The aim is to help transform the Brussels-based alliance from a static, Europe-centered, defensive organization into a security body with global ambitions and reach."

In a feature entitled "NATO tests expeditionary force," the Alliance website stated that the exercise was designed to "test the readiness of NATO's cutting-edge Response Force to carry out missions anywhere required at very short notice," and that "the Response Force will give the Alliance the ability to deploy up to 25,000 troops within five days anywhere in the world."

NATO has also penetrated Africa in recent years by airlifting over 30,000 African Union troops to the Darfur region of western Sudan from 2005-2007 and since then thousands of Ugandan and Burundian forces into the Somali capital of Mogadishu for combat operations in support of the isolated, largely nominal Transitional Federal Government.

Starting in 2008 NATO has established a permanent naval presence off the Horn of Africa in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea with Operation Allied Provider, Operation Allied Protector and since 2009 and into the indefinite future Operation Ocean Shield.

Reports emanating from the region disclose that NATO warships recently intercepted a vessel allegedly bringing weapons to Eritrea as part of operations to enforce a naval blockade against the small Horn of Africa nation, the result of a United Nations Security Council resolution passed in December 2009 – with China abstaining and Libya, now the victim of the same, voting against it – that imposed an arms embargo and travel bans against one of perhaps as few as four African nations, including besieged Libya, not recruited as junior partners to AFRICOM through regular multinational military endeavors

like Operation Flintlock, Operation Africa Endeavor, Natural Fire drills and training exercises led by the crews of American warships assigned to the Africa Partnership Station program.

As always, NATO activities parallel those of the Pentagon. African Standby Force brigades now operational in East and West Africa and planned for the north, south and center of the continent are assisted and overseen by both AFRICOM and NATO. In February of 2010 an Alliance website published this account of the bloc's expanding role in Africa:

"Joint Command Lisbon is the operational lead for NATO/AU [African Union] engagement, and has a Senior Military Liaison Officer at AU HQ in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. NATO also supports staff capacity building through the provision of places on NATO training courses to AU staff supporting AMISOM [African Union Mission in Somalia], and support to the operationalisation of the African Standby Force – the African Union's vision for a continental, on-call security apparatus similar to the NATO Response Force." [4]

And as the AFRICOM website announced in January ahead of this year's Africa Endeavor exercise to be held in June, a planning conference in Mali "brought together more than 180 participants from 41 African, European and North American nations and observers from [the] Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Eastern African Standby Force and NATO to plan interoperability testing of communications and information systems of participating nations." [5]

The following month an article appeared in a Kenyan publication claiming that Ramtane Lamamra, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, "confirmed that Nato is to sign a military cooperation agreement with the AU" with special emphasis to be placed on consolidating the African Standby Force. [6]

As the Russian deputy foreign minister was quoted asserting above, it has taken less than four months from the adoption of NATO's new Strategic Concept to its initial implementation in North Africa.

The following are extracts from Strategic Concept: For the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [7], endorsed at the NATO summit late last November:

"The citizens of our countries rely on NATO to defend Allied nations, to deploy robust military forces where and when required for our security, and to help promote common security with our partners around the globe."

"NATO has a unique and robust set of political and military capabilities to address the full spectrum of crises – before, during and after conflicts. NATO will actively employ an appropriate mix of those political and military tools to help manage developing crises that have the potential to affect Alliance security, before they escalate into conflicts; to stop ongoing conflicts where they affect Alliance security; and to help consolidate stability in post-conflict situations where that contributes to Euro-Atlantic security."

"Instability or conflict beyond NATO borders can directly threaten Alliance security."

"Some NATO countries will become more dependent on foreign energy suppliers and in some cases, on foreign energy supply and distribution networks for their energy needs."

The new Strategic Concept calls for plans to “develop and maintain robust, mobile and deployable conventional forces to carry out both our Article 5 responsibilities and the Alliance’s expeditionary operations, including with the NATO Response Force” and to “develop the capacity to contribute to energy security.”

The blueprint for a 21st century global expeditionary NATO also affirms:

“Crises and conflicts beyond NATO’s borders can pose a direct threat to the security of Alliance territory and populations. NATO will therefore engage, where possible and when necessary, to prevent crises, manage crises, stabilize post-conflict situations and support reconstruction. Where conflict prevention proves unsuccessful, NATO will be prepared and capable to manage ongoing hostilities.”

“Unique in history, NATO is a security Alliance that fields military forces able to operate together in any environment; that can control operations anywhere through its integrated military command structure; and that has at its disposal core capabilities that few Allies could afford individually.”

After launching a full-scale war against a European nation for the first time since the end of World War II in Yugoslavia in 1999 and joining the U.S. in Afghanistan two years later in what is now the longest war in the world, NATO is putting its new global military doctrine into brutal and deadly effect in Africa.

Notes

- 1) <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-EF8DF5B6-C1488A4E/natolive/71679.htm>
- 2) Voice of Russia, May 17, 2011
- 3) Global Energy War: Washington’s New Kissinger’s African Plans
Stop NATO, January 22, 2009
<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/08/26/global-energy-war-washingtons-new-kissingers-african-plans>
- 4) North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
February 24, 2010
.....
New Colonialism: Pentagon Carves Africa Into Military Zones
Stop NATO, May 5, 2010
<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2010/05/05/new-colonialism-pentagon-carves-africa-into-military-zones>
- 5) U.S. Africa Command, January 31, 2011
<http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=5895&lang=0>
- 6) Africa: Global NATO Seeks To Recruit 50 New Military Partners
Stop NATO, February 20, 2011
<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2011/02/20/africa-global-nato-seeks-to-recruit-50-new-military-partners>
- 7) <http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf>

The original source of this article is Stop NATO
Copyright © [Rick Rozoff](#), Stop NATO, 2011

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Rick Rozoff](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca